

**Testimony in SUPPORT of House Bill 1297 –Zombie Permit Elimination Act, Environment and Transportation Committee**

Dear Chairman Barve and the Environment and Transportation Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments **in SUPPORT of HB1297**, the Zombie Permit Elimination Act.

My name is Victoria Powers, a student at University of Maryland and intern at Department of Education. My interest in Valley Protein started since I've read an article by Jeremy Cox in the Bay Journal on March 6, 2019. Under the expired wastewater permit, there has been tons of gallons of discharge poured into the nearby rivers on the eastern shore. Roman Jesien, a scientist with the Maryland Coastal Bays Program and board member with the Dorchester Citizens group, has stated that nitrogen levels there remained unchanged and phosphorus levels are going up. The Valley Protein plant remains the largest point-source polluter in that watershed. I am concerned about what their wastewater will do to the biodiversity in those rivers and eventually the bay.

I even emailed Randy Denny, who is a Regulatory and Compliance Engineer with the MDE/Compliance Program. I was told that Valley Protein has submitted a NPDES Discharge Permit renewal application to MDE, yet MDE extended the expired permit until it is renewed. I was not given an answer as to when it will be renewed, or if anything were to change with the amount of waste being discharge. But was told, that review of the facility's recent effluent monitoring data shows that it has been in noncompliance with the fecal coliform and total phosphorus limitations listed in the expired NPDES Discharge Permit.

Valley Proteins is operating on a permit that expired in 2006.

My hope is to hold this company and many more accountable in the pollution that they have caused to our waterways. We deserve fresh, clean and clear water to fish, swim and boat in; and other species deserve a clean space to live in.

For these reasons I urge the Committee to adopt a FAVORABLE report on HB1297. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Victoria Powers  
Dorchester County, Maryland